

# CARRICKFERGUS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

**Principal:**

**J.A. Maxwell**

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Education Authority - North-Eastern Region

3 April 2020

**Dear Parent / Guardian**

## Online Learning

As we approach the end of the second week of school closure, I wish first and foremost to thank you for the ongoing tremendous support. I am aware that many of you – in already very challenging circumstances – have been working hard to support your child as they come to grips with new routines, new learning platforms and new educational technology. Carrickfergus Grammar School is deeply appreciative of all efforts that you have made to support your child's learning in recent weeks and – by extension – support us in our endeavours to provide your child with optimal learning resources to meet their needs. Thank you.

We also remain very proud of our students, who have embraced the new systems with aplomb and with some determination. I have enjoyed listening to the anecdotes of teachers who have spoken with enthusiasm about work which has been completed to very high standards by their students.

We believe that the distance learning provision in place will allow your child to continue their education in the most effective way possible, whilst also affording them the routine and stability which they most probably need at this challenging time. We encourage our students to continue to follow their timetables as closely as possible, whilst appreciating that this may not always be possible for a number of students who are, for example, sharing technology. As such, work set by teachers is slightly flexible to allow students the opportunity to complete work when they can. All work should be completed by all students, and we would strongly encourage a routine whereby work is completed on the day it is set.

After the Easter holidays, all students who are enrolled with personal Google e-mail addresses will be removed from the online classrooms. At this stage, all students should be using only their @c2ken.net Google address.

**FURTHER EXCELLENCE from PRESENT STRENGTHS**

[www.carrickfergusgrammar.com](http://www.carrickfergusgrammar.com)

[info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk)

## **Easter Holidays**

The Easter holidays run from the end of Period 3 on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April until Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April (inclusive). No work will be uploaded onto the online systems by staff during this period, and there is no expectation that students will be accessing the rooms during this period. When school commences again on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020, it will be on a Week 1 Timetable.

Carrickfergus Grammar School will remain open during this period for the supervision of the small number of children of key workers who are availing of this service.

## **Examinations**

The school awaits clarification from the Exam Boards regarding the process for the determination of GCSE and A Level grades. In the absence of such information at this time, school does not wish to speculate. We will inform parents and students immediately when the situation becomes clear.

I wish to advise that Year 11 and Year 13 students will be expected to continue their studies online. There is no exact clarification yet from external authorities regarding revised assessment procedures for these year groups, and therefore there is no scope for them to discontinue their learning.

Whilst we appreciate that students in Years 12 and 14 may see little merit in the continuation of their study at this stage, the reality is that under normal circumstances they would have been in school until May and we believe that these students also need structure in their lives in these unprecedented times. Additionally, for the vast majority of these students in Years 12 and 14 who will move on to 'A' Level / post-16 study and / or University education or apprenticeships, we feel it is incumbent to continue courses to ensure they receive access to the best resources and learning opportunities we can give them at this stage. The advice from CCEA is that students should continue towards the completion of their programmes of study. Furthermore, should students wish to appeal grades they receive in August, they may have the opportunity to or be required to sit a module at a later stage. Therefore, it is in their interests to continue learning until clarification comes. We trust that parents will understand this stance. Teachers will therefore continue to provide work for Years 12 and 14.

## **Internal Examinations**

Presently, internal examinations for Years 8-10 in the week beginning 18<sup>th</sup> May still stand on the calendar. Teachers will continue to provide resources online which will allow all students to gain knowledge appropriate for these exams. Decisions will be made soon after Easter regarding their format, should students still not be in school by 18<sup>th</sup> May. It is therefore important for Years 8-10 to engage effectively with the online work and submit it to their teachers when required.

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## **Free School Meals**

According to the Communities Minister, families will receive £2.70 per child per day for each day of term the schools are closed. This money will be paid to families on a fortnightly basis. The Education Authority will process payments in the same way they do for uniform grants. The Education Authority already has the bank details for the vast majority of those in receipt of free school meals. There are however a number of families for whom bank details are not held. These families should have been contacted via a text message and advised to complete an online form on the Education Authority website. It is vital that people respond to any request from the Education Authority to avoid delay in payment.

## **Education Maintenance Allowance**

The Department for the Economy and Department of Education have advised that students in receipt of EMA will not be financially disadvantaged in respect of the support that they would ordinarily be entitled to, and are working closely with the Student Loans Company (SLC) to ensure that EMA weekly allowance and bonus payments continue following school and college closures due to Covid-19.

School continues to process and administer this on behalf of our students entitled to this scheme.

## **Communication**

Information and updates regarding individual subjects will be posted in the respective Google Classrooms.

Parents can contact the school as usual via the school phone line on 028 93 363615 during the day or the additional number of 07395930976. As a school we will remain in regular contact with staff, parents and students. The general school e-mail account is [info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk) . Any general Google Classroom issues can be addressed by forwarding the query to [kcrooks461@c2kni.net](mailto:kcrooks461@c2kni.net) . Safeguarding issues will be dealt with as a matter of urgency. These, and any other pastoral issues, may be addressed by contacting [lkane502@c2kni.net](mailto:lkane502@c2kni.net) .

The school community is also asked to check the school website on a regular basis for further updates.

**In Summary:**

Tel: 028 93 363615 // 07395930976

Email:

General: [info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk)

Google Classroom / IT: [kcrooks461@c2kni.net](mailto:kcrooks461@c2kni.net)

Pastoral / Safeguarding: [lkane502@c2kni.net](mailto:lkane502@c2kni.net)

Website: [www.carrickfergusgrammar.com](http://www.carrickfergusgrammar.com)

**Conclusion**

Finally, may I thank you as parents for your tremendous support, and may I wish you, your children and the staff of this fine school a safe and blessed Easter break.

**Please take care and stay safe.**

**Yours faithfully**

**J. A. Maxwell  
Principal**

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